

## Dalai Lama Mountain Trek



Duration: 11 days

This magnificent trek offers the ultimate combination of breath-taking scenery and fascinating culture, in the southernmost ridges of the Indian Himalayas. Starting and finishing at McLeod Ganj, residence of His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and a large community of Tibetan Buddhist exiles, this challenge promises an extra-special experience.

We trek through the friendly villages, high pastures and forests of the southern flanks of the Dhauladhar (White Mountains), gradually gaining height as we follow trails used for centuries by local shepherds. We're constantly rewarded with far-reaching vistas of the beautiful Kangra valley and surrounding mountains, but with a high point of 3200m, remain at relatively low altitudes.

This trek is packed with diverse cultural discovery, exceptional trekking and magnificent landscapes – all the ingredients for an unforgettable trip!

## DETAILED ITINERARY

## Day 1: Depart London

## Day 2: Arrive Delhi – Pathankot

On arrival, we transfer to a nearby hotel, where we can freshen up after our overnight flight and enjoy lunch before heading out to the bustling city for an afternoon sightseeing tour, including Old Delhi's Jama Masjid, the impressive 17<sup>th</sup>-century red-sandstone mosque, and famous markets of Chandni Chowk. Later this evening, we head to New Delhi Railway Station to board our overnight train. A cultural experience in itself, the journey takes us from the crowds and chaos of Delhi through rustic scenes of life in the countryside in our comfortable air-

conditioned sleeper carriages. Night train.

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### Day 3: Pathankot – Dharamsala – McLeod Ganj

Arriving at the small city of Pathankot in the early morning, we meet the awaiting local crew and vehicles at the station and begin our journey deeper into the foothills of the Himalayas towards the former British hill station of Dharamsala and its hilltop neighbour, McLeod Ganj. Now home to the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetan Buddhists, this colourful settlement, known as 'Little Lhasa' has become a pilgrimage centre. After checking into our hotel, we set off on a walking tour. We visit the Dalai Lama's complex, the Tibetan Library and St John's Church. In the evening we have a briefing over dinner, and anyone who wishes can head out to explore the fun shopping experience of the local night bazaar. Night hotel.

**Drive approx. 3 hours**

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### Day 4: McLeod Ganj – Kareri

After an energising breakfast, we meet our local guides and head out on the first day of our trek challenge. Setting off from McLeod Ganj (1760m), we have a gentle ascent through pine forests, traditional Gaddi shepherd villages, and terraced fields of rice and barley towards Kareri village. We gain a wonderful insight to the local way of life here in these remote villages, as farmers work their land and livestock in ways that have changed little for centuries. Our camp for the night is set in a picturesque spot beside a river and watermill. Night camp (1985m)

**Trek approx. 6-8 hours**

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### Day 5: Kareri Village – Bahl

Continuing our gradual ascent, we leave Kareri behind us, trekking once again through remote villages, open meadows and rhododendron forests. These forests are home to a rich and diverse birdlife, including colourful pheasants, as well as larger animals including deer and even black bears and leopards – although it is extremely rare to see these! Upon reaching Barlai village, we stop for a relaxed lunch, before more uphill trekking brings us to our camp at Bahl village. Night camp (2100m)

**Trek approx. 5-7 hours**

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### Day 6: Bahl – Triund

We have a challenging but spectacular day of trekking to look forward to, as we head through a woodland reserve with the promise of fantastic views of the surrounding mountain scenery. We pass through the small village of Galu, making our way through forests of cedar and rhododendron. Our destination today is our highest camp at Triund, where our reward is the particularly awe-inspiring views of the permanently snow-capped peaks and ridges of the Dhaula Dhar mountain range. The panorama extends out across the Kangra Valley and down to McLeod Ganj. The evening sky is a sight in itself! Night camp (2850m)

**Trek approx. 5-6 hours**

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## Day 7: Triund – Laka Got – Triund

This morning we enjoy breakfast with a marvellous view, before heading out on a round trip to Laka Got, where open meadow meets the end of a glacier. Our trail traverses along the glacial moraine to reach Laka Got (3200m), a temporary shepherd encampment and the highest point of our challenge. Here we can revel in the views over Laka Glacier, which until early summer remains full of snow, before it is melted with the monsoon. We can also see across to Lahesh Cave, a shelter used by shepherds when travelling over the mountains with their flock. We should have plenty of time to enjoy the views and a picnic lunch, before returning to our camp at Triund for our last night under canvas. Night camp (2850m)

**Trek approx. 5 – 7 hours**

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## Day 8: Triund – McLeod Ganj

This morning we turn our backs on the mountains and enjoy the last section of our trek, which is mostly downhill and fairly relaxing after all our uphill trekking over the previous days! Back in McLeod Ganj, we have time to explore more of this unique town, including the monastery. If time allows we may also be able to visit Norbulingka Institute, near Dharamshala, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Tibetan culture. Back at our hotel we enjoy a well-deserved meal to celebrate our many achievements this week! Night hotel.

**Trek approx. 3-4 hours**

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## Day 9: McLeod Ganj – Pathankot – Delhi

We can enjoy a more leisurely start to the day than we've been used to, and enjoy some free time for last-minute shopping in McLeod Ganj. In the afternoon, we regroup for our transfer back to Pathankot ready for our overnight train to Delhi. Night train.

**Drive approx. 3 hours**

*(Lunch not included)*

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## Day 10: Depart Delhi, Arrive UK

Arrive Delhi early morning and transfer to international airport our flight to London.

*(Lunch not included if not in-flight)*

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All transport from London to Delhi return
- Overnight train from Delhi to Pathankot return
- All meals except where specified, accommodation and camping equipment
- Discover Adventure leaders; doctor with group of 15 or more participants; local guides and support team
- Vehicle support and back-up equipment
- Entry to any sites visited as part of the itinerary

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Sleeping bag & sleeping mat
- India entry visa
- Airline taxes: we cap these so £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Inbound airport departure tax (no tax applied at the time of writing)
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable charges as per Terms and Conditions



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 26 Feb 2021, and the challenge is subject to change.